

Building Integrity Workshop for Members of Parliament

The first ever organized Building Integrity (BI) Workshop for Members of Parliament took place at the International Anti-Corruption Academy (Laxenburg, Vienna) on 8 and 9 November 2014. Representatives from 20 allied and partner countries participated in the discussions on corruption risks in the defence and security sector. Current practice and collaboration mechanisms were reviewed and possibilities for further developments to enhance the role of parliaments were explored.

The workshop, hosted by the Austrian Government, was organized by NATO in collaboration with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) and the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC). It brought together representatives from 20 countries, as well as high level representatives from NATO and NATO Commands, NATO PA, GOPAC, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), academics and subject matter experts.



In his opening remarks, the Assistant Secretary General of the Political Affairs and Security Policy division, Ambassador Stamatopoulos, stressed the necessity of common efforts in preventing and fighting corruption risks because “corruption kills, it kills economic opportunity and it kills investment. Corruption, like a virus, does not respect borders and cannot be contained by one nation acting alone. (...) The defence and security sector is certainly not spared. To the contrary, this sector often benefits from a widespread culture of secrecy and impunity”. Ambassador Stamatopoulos highlighted the importance of NATO’s contribution in the prevention of corruption in this sector, because, as confirmed by NATO’s operational experience, “corruption has a direct impact on security. (...) Corruption costs money and it costs lives.”

Parliaments play a central role in overseeing the activities of the executive, including defence ministries, as well as the military defence industry and private contractors,



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and closely scrutinize budget, procurement and personnel decisions. Lieutenant General Reissner, Joint Forces Commander – Austrian Armed Forces, underlined that “strengthening transparency, accountability and integrity in the defence and security sector is a challenge (...) especially for the legislative bodies” because in this sector “huge amounts of money are invested and therefore the legislator is called to create effective, efficient and enforceable regulations”. He continued highlighting Austrian good practice in the field, including the code of conduct for the personnel of the Austrian Ministry of Defence and the Austrian Armed Forces.

NATO will draw on the results of the discussions in developing the BI programme for 2015-2017.

